

mitting that I had, at all events, completely anticipated Mr. Phillips; but whether he has added much original or valuable matter to the subject as such had been previously detailed before "the Royal Commission on Health of Towns," by myself, in Croydon-house, on 17th June, 1843, and afterwards by J. Butler Williams, Esq., on 21st March, 1844, I leave it to competent and impartial inquirers to decide.—I am, &c.,

WILLIAM DYER GUTHRIE,
A.M., F.R.C.S.L., &c.
3, Downie-place, Edinburgh.

[Mr. Guthrie's letter reached us rather too late in the week to allow of our inserting in the present number his communication on Tubular Sewering. It will appear in our next.]

SIR,—Excuse me for mentioning that in the "Penny Cyclopædia," vol. xxi. p. 319, Fig. 4, under the article "Sewer," there is a description by Mr. Cuff of a drain, which appears to be much more adapted for the purpose intended than that described in your journal of last week; because amongst other features, the solid matter, entering with the water, is collected, and does not escape into the main drain.

I have no sort of interest in any way of forming sewers, but it struck me that it was right to mention the above for the mutual benefit of your numerous readers.—I am, Sir, your humble servant,
Dec. 5th, 1844.

A SUBSCRIBER.

ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION.

SIR,—In THE BUILDER of November 23rd, you inserted a letter of mine relative to "Architectural Competition," which your correspondent "Scrutator," in last week's number, wishing to find fault with, says, that "it is pure nonsense to talk of an impartial architect," to select the best design in competition, and that it would hardly be supposed that Sir Robert Smirke, if placed in such a position, would select a design which "would clash with his professional reputation at the British Museum?" (Some say that the new buildings should be taken down, instead of the old, with its painted ceilings, inlaid floors, &c., &c.) Now, Sir Robert Smirke, however bigotted he may be to pagan architecture, when called upon to give his opinion of the best design for the Cemetery Chapels at Nunhead, laid aside his prejudices, and decided upon one of pointed style, allowed, I think, by every one, to be the best design out of the sixty-five sets of drawings he had to make a selection from.

So that I think we may safely say that Sir Robert Smirke is an "impartial architect," and not the reverse as your correspondent suspects. In the advertisement of the "Baths and Wash-houses for the Poor," "Scrutator" thinks it "looks very suspicious" to have the name and address written on the corner of the drawings. I do not see why he should object to this, for if there is to be any jobbing in this affair, it will be done just as well with a private mark as with the name and address of the architect on the designs. If a "Committee-man" should happen to have a relation or friend who intends to "send in," he will find out his design by instinct without troubling himself to look at the corner. Hoping you will insert this, I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant, T.

London, Dec. 4, 1844.

[We think no competition should be entered into without the names are all openly exhibited; as long as matters are conducted otherwise, the private assassination in the dark of true design, construction and integrity will still be perpetrated.—Ed.]

HARDY TESTIMONIAL.

SIR,—Knowing from past, I might say painful, experience the corruptness of the present system of architectural competition, it is with much pleasure I have noticed of late in your valuable periodical several letters calling attention to the subject, and offering various suggestions for its amelioration. Among your correspondents, I find one who says (in No. 93), "All architects who compete should know the class of men before whom they are to exhibit their talents; and perhaps exposure would in a few cases influence an honest decision."

And again, "Let the profession coalesce, and form some wholesome rules to guide themselves in transactions of this nature." This view of the subject so perfectly accorded with my own, that I determined for the future (having put my own construction on the former part of the quotation) to do my utmost to expose any chicanery in architectural competition that should come under my notice.

Agreeably to such determination, I shall briefly as possible relate the particulars of a case that I unhesitatingly designate as grossly corrupt, and alike disgraceful to the committee and unfair to the competitors. Some weeks back I submitted a design (in common, I believe, with many others) for a monument proposed to be erected to the late Admiral Sir Thomas Hardy. The design was forwarded to the honorary secretary for the honourable committee—for they are "all honourable men." In due time my drawings were returned, and I thought no more of the matter, till last week I happened to be looking over the *Illustrated London News*, when I was no less surprised than disgusted to learn by a paragraph in that publication the astounding fact that the monument now erecting to Sir Thomas Hardy was from a design of Henry Dyke Acland, Esq., of Killerton, an unprofessional gentleman and a member of that committee appointed to decide on the merits of the different designs previously submitted to them.

The following extracts from the paragraph will, however, best explain this barefaced transaction:—"Designs were solicited from the most eminent architects, and numbers were sent in for the decision of the committee. The choice fell on the plan of Arthur Henry Dyke Acland, Esq., of Killerton, Devonshire. This gentleman is a magistrate of the county of Devon, son of Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, Bart., M.P. for the county, and brother of Thomas Dyke Acland, Esq., M.P. for West Somersetshire. Although an independent gentleman, and no architect by profession, he is most ardently attached to architectural pursuits; and although he was on the Hardy Committee himself, yet, on having sent in the design anonymously, and it being selected by the committee without the least knowledge of the designer, he left the committee, hoping they would put the superintendence of the structure into the hands of those who had sent in other good designs for competition. This, however, met with difficulty, and that of Mr. Acland, with the aid of an experienced builder, Mr. Gindard, of Bridport, has been proceeded with most favourably and expeditiously.

Now, Sir, may I ask, did you ever meet with a more disgraceful case, or one more strongly militating against all preconceived rules of fair and honourable competition?

A pretty story, that of Mr. Acland's extreme sense of delicacy. What limy nonsense is this? Let me ask Mr. Acland one question: what part did he, could he act on the committee?

With regard to Mr. Acland's design, the commentator above quoted, after saying it is *without pretension*, continues; by way of definition, to say, it is every thing that it should be, and that a more appropriate emblem to a naval warrior could not have been selected.

I can hardly offer an opinion on this part of the subject, only having seen the small sketch given in the *Illustrated News*; and, if I may judge from that, so far from subscribing to the panegyric bestowed on it by our worthy critic, I think I never beheld a more shaft-like, common-place affair; and must confess myself at a loss to discover the slightest monumental (not to say naval) feeling in it, or the least affinity to the subject to be commemorated.

Let me recommend, in conclusion, that Mr. Acland inscribe on the base the epitaph of his great prototype:

"Si monumentum requiris circumspecte."

Circumspecte might be translated, look aloft.*

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

London, Dec. 5th, 1844.

R.

COMPETITION AND CONTRACTS FOR STONE.

SIR,—In your valuable paper you have frequently exposed the methods which committees, &c. employ to enable them to get the

* (Perhaps our readers will remember the verger's translation which appeared in the newspapers a few years ago—*Sir! come! spy! see!*—Ed.)

cream of some fifty or sixty designs by offering a paltry premium to architects, although there is little doubt but they have settled to whom it is to be given before the competition is advertised; but previous to seeing the advertisement which I include, I had no idea that the same means would be used to obtain a supply of materials for erecting a whole building, for if each quarryman in Yorkshire send a ton (value about 25s.), there will not be much more required. I suppose, in like manner, the timber and brick merchants and others must contribute their portions, delivered on the ground free of expense, and then it will be a cheap building forsooth. Yorkshiremen are greenish (?); but if they are to be imposed on in this manner, they are more so than I took them for, and will soon be fit inmates of the proposed building. A little of your advice might be of service to them.—Yours, &c.,

Dec. 11, 1844. PAY AND RE PAID.

The advertisement referred to appeared in the *Leeds Intelligencer*, and is as follows:—

"TO STONE MERCHANTS, CONTRACTORS, AND OTHERS.—The Committee of Justices of the Peace appointed for the North and East-Ridings of Yorkshire, for the building of a Pauper Lunatic Asylum for the said Ridings, are ready to receive specimens of rough, flat-bedded walling stone, suitable for foundations and rough walls, varying from three to nine inches in thickness. Sealed Tenders for supplying the same to be delivered to Mr. John Holby, Solicitor, Low Ousegate, York, the Clerk to the Committee, on or before the 18th of December instant, and a duplicate copy to be sent to Messrs. Scott and Moffatt, 20, Spring-gardens, London, the Architects. Specimens, containing not less than One Ton Weight or Cube Yard, to be delivered Free of Expense, before the above date, on the Building Site at Clifton, near York. The architects will be glad to see Specimens of Stone suited for the general walling. Any further information may be obtained from the Architects. York, December, 1844."

Miscellaneous.

ARCHITECTURAL IMPROVEMENTS, PERTH.

—The terminus of the Scottish central line of railway is proposed to be on that part of the town's property lying between the Waterworks and Princes-street, now occupied by Messrs. Hepburn and Grahams, as wood and coal yards. The situation will be very convenient, and ornamental to the city, occupying, as the buildings probably will, the whole extent of the ground facing the South Inch from the Edinburgh road to the river, as the terminus will also be that of the Strathmore Railway, as well as of the Dundee and Perth, provided the line by the Carse throughout be adapted. The latter, after passing Kinfauns, crosses the Willowgate near its mouth, and runs up Moncreiffe Island to the top, where it would cross the Tay immediately opposite to the joint terminus.

THE NEW GRAVING DOCK AT ALEXANDRIA.

—This dock is rapidly approaching completion, after ten years of labour, and after several millions of dollars having been spent upon it. The public may not be aware this has been cut out of artificial rock, formed of lime, pulverised brick, and pozzolani, raised on piles driven closely together to a depth of 30 feet in the sand. The chief cause of difficulty and delay arose, in the first instance, from the operations having to be conducted under water by means of diving apparatus at a depth of five fathoms (there being here no ebb or flow of tide of any consequence); and, in the second place, from the difficulty of giving sufficient stability to the formation, so as to enable it to resist the enormous pressure from below when excavated. Its length is 260 feet and breadth 60.

DISINFECTION OF SEWERS, CRESSPOOL, &c.—M. Siret finds that a mixture of copperas, charcoal, and gypsum, in the following proportions, if thrown into a sewer or cesspool, will purify it to a remarkable degree:—sulphate of iron (green copperas), 200 lb.; sulphate of zinc (white copperas), 25 lb.; vegetable charcoal (common or wood charcoal), 10 lb.; sulphate of lime (gypsum), 265 lb.

Messrs. Bowers and Murray, of Liverpool, are the successful competitors (from among fourteen in number) for the excavation of the Railway Dock at Hull. It is expected that the dock will be ready for business in the spring of 1846.